Foreign flights from Cochin International Airport

*408. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN:
SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any foreign airline companies applied for sanction to commence service from Cochin International Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have accorded the sanction;

(d) whether it is a fact that Air India is insisting on royalty from foreign companies to commence these services;

(e) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(f) whether any foreign companies are paying royalty for conducting services in India; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIAL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (g) Cochin airport was declared International on 23rd May, 2000. Air India and Indian Airlines together have been operating flights from Cochin to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Bahrain, Muscat, Dammam, Kuwait and Sharjah.

So far, Oman Air, Kuwait Airways, Gulf Air, Sri Lankan Airlines, Qatar Airways, Emirates, Saudia, Singapore Airlines (and its subsidiary Silk Air), Yemen Airways, Aeroflot and Uzbekistan Airways have expressed interest to operate services to/from Cochin. Oman Air has already been granted access to Cochin and they are expected to commence services shortly. Government of India has also agreed to grant Cochin as a point of call in lieu of Chennai to Saudia as requested by them. A commitment has also been given to grant Cochin as a point of call to Emirates by September, 2002. Kuwait and Yemen have also been offered Cochin as a point of call for their respective designated carrier subject to commercial arrangement with the designated Indian carrier.

Offer of an airport as a new point of call to any foreign airlines is

decided during bilateral air services consultations with the concerned country. These issues are decided on the principle of reciprocity and benefits accruing to both sides. Since Cochin is a commercially attractive point of call to foreign airlines and their respective countries do not have a similar commercially attractive additional point of call for the designated airlines of India, it is balanced through a commercial agreement between the designated airlines of the country concerned and India. The exact nature of commercial arrangement varies from case to case and is worked out at airline level.

Aeroflot, Bangladesh Biman, EL AL Airlines, Egypt Air, Ethiopian airlines, KLM, Royal, Jordanian Airlines, Sabena, Singapore Airlines, Syrian Arab Airlines and Yemen Airways are presently paying compensation to Air India. In addition, Air India is also having other types of commercial arrangements with Asiana Airlines, Austrian Airlines, Air France, Air Emirates, Gulf Air, Kuwait Airways, Lufthansa, Malaysian Airlines, Saudia, Scandinavian Airlines, Swiss Air, Thai Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Air Mauritius and Bellview Airlines.

Increase in price of CNG

*409. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the price of CNG is likely to go up almost three times;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the availability of CNG is also not likely to improve before the crucial date of 30th September, 2001;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the additional cost would ultimately pass on to the commuters besides practical difficulties; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) to (d) The price of CNG depends, *inter-alia,* upon the price of natural gas, cost of transportation and compression, commercial considerations etc.

As per the action plan of the Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL), the